

# ReadyVirginia

## Planning **WITH** our Community

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The challenge for my community is  
**COMMUNICATION.**

The next slide is from the ReadyVirginia  
website about chemical emergencies.

# Stay Informed

In the event of a major chemical emergency, you will be notified by the authorities. To get your attention, **a siren could sound**, you might be **called by telephone**, or emergency personnel might **drive by and give instructions over a loudspeaker**. Officials could even come to your door. **Listen carefully to radio or television emergency alert stations** and strictly follow instructions.

“Your life could depend on it.”

...a siren could sound  
...called by telephone  
...instructions over a loudspeaker  
...listen carefully to radio or television...



“Your life could depend on it.”

The pages that address evacuation for hurricanes tell me to know the road condition by dialing 5-1-1 or visit a website.

5-1-1 does not connect from a TTY  
and websites require computer and  
electricity.

For my community, COMMUNICATION  
BEFORE,  
DURING, and  
AFTER

an emergency is a very real challenge.

Emergency Exercises often do not include people with communication challenges.

In a door to door evacuation notification, a “no response” may indicate a deaf or hard of hearing individual, and NOT an empty house or apartment.



# Communication Challenges

Deaf

Late-Deafened  
Hearing

Hard of

DeafBlind

Speech-impaired

We are often “Out of the Loop”  
for emergency notification

## My community NEEDS:

1: **ACCESSIBLE** emergency  
information  
( auditory and visual form )

2: To be included in **emergency  
planning activities**

Deaf and Hard of Hearing have very different communication needs, and BOTH groups need accessible information.

DeafBlind individuals have unique communication needs.

Speech-Impaired individuals have another unique communication challenge.

Within these groups, **expressive** and **receptive** communication needs can – and often do – vary greatly.

Not all deaf use sign language.

What works well for one individual may not be at all effective for another.

To be fair, some of the responsibility is  
OURS.

But, the information **MUST** be presented in  
a way we can understand.

# Individual Preparedness

## Alerts

- Text alerts to pagers, PDAs, cell phones, email (ex. EmergencyEmail.org)
- Television with captioning \*\*\*
- Internet \*\*\*
- Telephone (R-911 systems)
- Buddy system with neighbor
- NOAA weather radio
- Radio – IF a hearing person can relay / interpret information

# Individual Preparedness

Basic “To Go” Kit:

Water / Food / Medicines

First Aid Kit

Flashlights

Personal Records

Seasonal Clothing

PLUS

It must be tailored to the INDIVIDUAL's needs, and may include:

- Batteries / chargers for PDA, pager, cell phone, Text Messenger
- TTY (with extra batteries)
- Amplifier for phone
- Assistive Listening devices
- Batteries: Hearing Aid, CI & other
- Spare Hearing Aid, CI charger
- Notepad & pen



Standard TTY's are like the old, basic analog phones, and will continue to work in a power outage.

Requires Batteries, which will last approximately 8 hours.

- Suggest additional batteries for longer periods of power outages

R-911 does not work with TTY's

# Challenges with Evacuations

Information from:

Captioned TV news

Text or Email Alerts

(ex: [EmergencyEmail.org](http://EmergencyEmail.org))

From relatives and friends

# Challenges with Evacuations

What's needed?

- Accessible public information
- Accessible public transportation, as not everyone drives.
- Responders aware of “special needs”
- Consumer involvement in planning and drills

# Challenges with Evacuation

- Advance information not always fully accessible / captioned
- Information and provision for adequate and accessible Public Transportation

# Challenges with Shelters

Identifying the communication needs of consumers: focus on the **functional**

How is information distributed?

Public Address Systems?

- Written Notices?

- Captioned Text?

- Interpreters?

# Challenges with Shelters

## Prepare for visual communication

- Use white/blackboards, bulletin boards, postings
- Contract in advance with sign language interpreters, CART, computer notetakers
- Obtain accessible telecommunications equipment
- Obtain and know how to use assistive listening system(s)
- Have signage re: accommodations available

Another point to consider:

A resident who does not speak or understand English has the same problems a deaf individual has: lack of Vital information.

Appropriate means must be developed to address the communication needs of ALL residents of your community.

# Challenges with Shelters

Shelter staff are often unfamiliar with service dogs, particularly hearing dogs, and that they are to be provided for under the ADA

- Prepare for the accommodation of service dogs in advance
- Train staff & volunteers to recognize service dogs
- Have signage / announcements that make it clear service dogs are welcome



Some of the responsibility lies with US – the consumers. Since we know of the challenges, we must work WITH you to address these needs.

# Planning: Where do we go from here?

**GET INVOLVED ! ! ! !**

- CERT, Citizen Corps, Red Cross training, join in emergency drills w/ local Emergency Management
- Contact 9-1-1 Center and register
- Encourage consumer involvement in “Special Needs Committees” and Advisory Boards
- Urge local non-profits and CIL’s to join VOAD

# Planning: Where do we go from here?

Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

804-662-9502 (V / TTY)

800-552-7917 (V / TTY)

[www.vddhh.org](http://www.vddhh.org)

- Provide training in communication access to emergency responders
- Educate public information officers & broadcasters to ensure that emergency messages are captioned.

“BEST PRACTICES Guide”

# Emergency Management / Red Cross

Contract with interpreters / interpreter agencies in advance for shelters and other area, such as police stations, public information centers.

# Work toward pre-placement of equipment for shelters:

- assistive listening devices
- visual alerting devices
- display boards – blackboards, white boards, bulletin boards
- pen & paper
- TTY's and amplified phones if phones are provided in the shelter
- Televisions for captioned news updates

-Afterwards -

## RECOVERY

- Recovery efforts must actively include non-profit organizations that have expertise in the needs of the different disability communities
- Public announcements and information regarding recovery work must be delivered in an accessible (VISUAL) manner

AWARENESS is the first step.

We can' t do it alone.

We WANT to be involved in the process.



# Questions?

